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Editor's Column...

Taking Stock

by Dick Wendt

Many important activities are now in progress in the U.S. political arena. Although *Risks and Rewards* is a nonpolitical publication, we're not able to ignore these activities. In the years to come, there could be significant changes in the U.S.

financial environment due to today's decisions on budget surpluses, tax level, Social Security and debt refinancing. The choices could affect the economy for years, if not decades, to come.

Sadly, actuaries have not been in the forefront of the public view, because



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either politicians are not interested in actuarial expertise or actuaries have not attained sufficient public visibility. The prime example of actuarial invisibility is the recent formation of George Bush's Social Security Commission. Actuaries and even the public would probably be surprised to learn that actuaries, known to be experts on Social Security, are totally absent from the panel.

Although our readers may think that Social Security discussions belong in the *Pension Section News*, any revision of the benefits or financing provisions will affect the entire investment environment, perhaps in unexpected ways. Actuaries need to move on two fronts: expand their public visibility and credibility in these important areas and consider how these potential changes may affect their expectations for inflation, interest rates and economic growth.

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